

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph *beginning on page 8, line 7* with the following amended paragraph:

-(c) aging the reactive silica species from step (b), preferably for no less than 5 minutes, at a temperature greater than -20°C in anhydrous form. The silica has the formula:



wherein $1.0 \geq w \geq 0$ and $1.5 \geq x \geq 0$ and wherein M when present is one or more metal ions. -